

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 151050Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6160
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, UR, JA
SUBJECT: SOHYO TO CAMPAIGN FOR RETURN OF NORTHERN
TERRITORIES

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

FOR NEW DELHI: PLS PASS TOKYO LABATT IMMERMANN

SUMMARY: SOHYO HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL LAUNCH CAMPAIGN FOR
RETURN OF SOVIET-HELD ISLAND NORTH OF HOKKAIDO, BUT
DESPITE PRESS BILLING, DECISION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE
PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT NEW DEPARTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. YOMIURI SHIMBUN REPORTED MARCH 13 THAT SOHYO LABOR
FEDERATION HAD DECIDED TO CONDUCT STEPPED-UP CAMPAIGN FOR
RETURN TO JAPAN OF FOUR ISLANDS OFF HOKKAIDO OCCUPIED BY
USSR SINCE 1945. SOVIETS' 1977 DECLARATION OF 200-MILE
FISHERY ZONE ENCOMPASSING NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND
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LIMITING JAPANESE ACTIVITY IN TRADITIONAL FISHING GROUNDS
PROMPTED ALL JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING BOTH
COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS (JSP), TO REAFFIRM THEIR DEMANDS
FOR RETURN OF ISLANDS. SOHYO, WHICH SUPPORTS JSP AND
KEEPS ITS POLICY LINES ON MOST ISSUES IN ACCORD WITH THOSE
OF JSP, HAD ISSUED CONDEMNATIONS OF SOVIETS' "ILLEGAL"
OCCUPATION OF ISLANDS IN UNISON WITH JSP BUT HAD DONE

LITTLE ELSE.

2. YOMIURI SAID SOHYO DECISION WAS TAKEN IN LINE WITH SOHYO LEADERSHIP'S DECISION TO ESCHEW "OVERLY IDEOLOGICAL" STANCES IN AGE OF DIET BALANCE BETWEEN RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTIES. IT FURTHER REPORTED THAT SOHYO CAMPAIGN ENVISAGED HOLDING OF MASS RALLY IN NEMURO CITY IN HOKKAIDO IN SEPTEMBER 1978, NATIONWIDE SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN, AND ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATION BY REPS OF VARIOUS SOHYO AFFILIATE UNIONS.

3. COMMENT: OUR LABOR MINISTRY, JSP AND EVEN SOHYO CONTACTS ARE ALL DOWNPLAYING SIGNIFICANCE OF CAMPAIGN. THEY SAY THAT, ALTHOUGH SOHYO IS INDEED PLANNING TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUES, STEPPED-UP CAMPAIGN DOES NOT REPRESENT NEW DEPARTURE AND IS NOT SEEN AS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT PART OF ON-GOING ATTEMPTS BY MAKIEDA-TOMIZUKA LEADERSHIP TO LOOSEN GRIP OF OLD, IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS ON SOHYO ACTIVITIES.

4. INSTEAD, WE ARE TOLD, IDEA FOR CAMPAIGN CAME FROM MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIAL IN SOHYO HEADQUARTERS, KANSAKU YAGI, CHIEF OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT DEPT. HE IS SAID TO BELONG TO PRO-CHINA GROUP WITHIN SOHYO AND TO HAVE SEEN NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE AS HANDY WAY TO HAVE SOHYO ATTACK SOVIETS. INASMUCH AS SOHYO WAS ALREADY ON RECORD FIRMLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONDEMNING SOVIET OCCUPATION, AND IT BEHOOVES ANY PARTY AFTER HOKKAIDO VOTES TO BE VOCAL ON ISSUE, SOHYO EXECUTIVES WENT ALONG WITH YAGI'S PROPOSAL. SHERMAN

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